

Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana
Education Outcomes Task Force
November 7, 2014
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Indiana Government Center South Building
Conference Rooms 4+5

In attendance: Melissa Ambre, Sean Coleman, Leslie Crist, Leslie Dunn, Laurie Elliott, Margaret Gant, Reba James, Rebecca Kubacki, Kaarin Lueck, Lenae Reedus, Gail Riecken, Anita Silverman, Kellie Whitcomb, Amanda Norris

Absent: Kate Coffman, J.T. Coopman, Cathy Danyluk, Nancy Gettinger, Susan Lightfoot, Robert Marra, Marg Mast, Marilyn Moores

Guests: Hamilton County Superior Court Judge Steven Nation (Youth Assistance Program), Dr. Jeff Pittman (Ivy Tech), Dr. William Wooten, Davi Stein-Kiley, Parri Black, and Steve Fritz (all from Youth First)

Task Force Chair, Dr. Susan Lockwood, opened the meeting and stated that the members would hear three presentations related to the USDOJ/USDOE objective: *"Formal processes and procedures-through statute, memoranda of understanding, and practice-that ensure successful, navigable transitions across multiple child-serving systems, and smooth reentry into communities."*

She reminded the group that the USDOJ/USDOE objectives were directly linked to court-involved youth, but actually had applicability to "systems-involved youth."

Presentation #1: Youth First

Dr. William Wooten, founder of Youth First, introduced his co-presenters, Davi Stein-Kiley, Parri Black, and Steve Fritz.

Youth First's Mission: To strengthen youth and families through evidence-based programs that prevent substance abuse, promote healthy behaviors, and maximize student success.

Youth First works closely with schools, churches, businesses, colleges, communities, and other agencies to provide a menu of proven programs and strategies. It works with the entire family unit, from first time parents with babies to families with teenagers. It gives families the tools to become better and stronger.

Youth First provides Master's level social workers free of charge in Southwest Indiana schools to help youth with Depression, Anxiety, Anger, Bullying, Peer Pressure, Divorce, Grief Adjustment, Substance Abuse, and Suicide Prevention.

A study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration demonstrates that Youth First interventions save \$18 for every \$1 spent. 75% of crimes in the US are committed by high school dropouts.

Youth First serves five counties: Vanderburg, Pike, Posey, Gibson, and Warrick.

Dr. Wooten emphasized that the program cannot “do this” to communities...it has to be grown. Communities need to “raise it up”.

www.youthfirstinc.org

Presentation #2: Hamilton County Superior Court Judge Steve Nation: Youth Assistance Program

Judge Nation presented information about the Youth Assistance Program, developed from a need to address the loss of potential in children who become systems-involved. It serves as a way to intervene with children and families and offers necessary supports to prevent youth from becoming drop-outs and delinquents.

The Youth Assistance Program functions as a “concierge of services”. It serves three basic purposes: tutoring, mentoring, and coordinating services.

Judge Nation emphasized the Youth Assistance Program helps six different school districts, but each district is unique, and has different needs. The district identifies the needs and the Youth Assistance Program helps meet the needs.

Tutoring services are arranged through the school districts. Mentoring is provided to youth who have no adults in their lives to help them sustain a vision for the future. Instead of creating additional programs, the Youth Assistance Program connects youth and families to existing programs in their communities.

School Counselors are permitted (with parent consent) to connect with the student’s tutor or mentor.

Some communities use structured summer programming to meet the needs of youth and keep them connected to positive supports.

Each school district’s Youth Assistance Program is a 501 (c) 3 and has its own advisory board.

The Youth Assistance Program is aligned to IC 31-32-3-11. The juvenile court judge initiates the program in the community.

Presentation #3: Dr. Jeff Pittman, Vice President, Ivy Tech Corporate College

Dr. Jeff Pittman presented Ivy Tech’s proposal for a pilot project at the Terre Haute campus, involving the use of mentors for at-risk youth who are enrolled at Ivy Tech in certificate or degree programs.

The objective of the mentoring program is to connect students with a “contact person” who can help them navigate the myriad of college life (enrollment, financial aid, scheduling, tutoring, etc.). Many at-risk youth are first generation college enrollees, and need additional support to help them with questions or issues that they face.

Ivy Tech has an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) page on its web-site. The typical Advisor to Student ratio is 1-700. The Terre Haute Campus has committed to assigning a specific mentor to those at-risk students who need one.

Kaarin Lueck asked Dr. Pittman if she could send him some specific issues that court involved youth have encountered when attempting to attend Ivy Tech. He readily agreed that it would be helpful to know about these issues ahead of time in order to be proactive in resolving them.

Anita Silverman asked if Ivy Tech had on-line solutions for students in residential placements. He stated that there were on-line options available.

Gail Riecken asked if there was a way that Ivy Tech could offer similar support to at-risk youth who were completing education and moving on to the workforce. She stated that there was a need for a similar type of “bridge” between these two stages of youth development.

Leslie Crist pointed out that there are several JAG (Jobs for America’s Graduates) programs in the Terre Haute area, and those youth would benefit from having a mentor on the Ivy Tech campus.

Dr. Pittman indicated that the mentorship program is ready to begin in the spring, 2015 semester. The Task Force will work on developing mechanisms to identify youth who could benefit from this pilot project.

Additional Task Force Business:

1. OJJDP Award: Susan Lockwood advised the group of Indiana’s receipt of a 12-month planning grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The objective of the grant is to develop a Statewide Comprehensive Juvenile Reentry System. She informed the group of a need to establish a STATEWIDE reentry task force, along with two REGIONAL task forces (South Bend and Indianapolis), to create an effective strategic plan to identify and address barriers to juvenile reentry.

The task forces need to include representatives from the following perspectives: Public Safety, Corrections, Housing, Health, Education, Substance Abuse, Children and Family Services, Employment, and Business.

She stressed that she didn’t want the group to duplicate efforts that were already in progress. She stated that she would be following up with the group to get input on establishing the three Reentry Task Forces.

2. Indiana Juvenile Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Project: Kellie Whitcomb advised the group of Indiana’s receipt of this implementation grant. Two years ago, the State was involved in a planning grant to address the needs of court-involved youth with a mental health diagnosis. Upon completion of the planning process, Indiana did not get the implementation funding. However, after re-applying, we received implementation funding this year. Again, it was stressed that there are some overlaps between the OJJDP Reentry planning grant and the Mental Health implementation grant, and there is a need to make sure that efforts are not duplicated.
3. Check and Connect: Susan Lockwood asked the group if they knew about this Truancy Prevention program, initiated through the University of Minnesota, and funded through the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce as an intervention. No one in the group knew about the

program. Susan said she would follow up and present additional information to the group at the January meeting.

4. Funding for Juvenile Education: Susan Lockwood updated the group on Task Force activities related to funding for Juvenile Education. Susan Lockwood and Rebecca Kubacki met with Representative Tim Brown from the House Ways and Means Committee, who suggested that IDOC ask to be funded as a school corporation. He suggested that they also meet with Representatives Robert Behning and Todd Huston from the House Education Committee. Representatives Behning and Huston were supportive of the idea and advised that it be taken to the State Budget Agency and IDOC.

At this time, members of the State Budget Agency have stated that a change in funding would probably require a change in the law. They asked that it be studied further.

Susan Lockwood asked the Task Force members if it would be helpful, since a change in law was necessary, to see if all court involved youth, including those in detention centers, be assigned to one "Juvenile Justice" school corporation. The Task Force agreed to study the issue further.

Laurie Elliott briefly discussed an existing initiative with Robert Marra and Ball State University to explore the Charter School option for detention centers.

5. Susan Lockwood called the group's attention to an excerpt of a report from the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice. She stated that the excerpt was specific to Justice and Schools, and provided the information to the Task Force members.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next meeting scheduled for Friday, January 9, 2015 from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. in the Indiana Government Center, South Building